



# BetterSafe

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR FAMILY'S SAFETY

## Picnics, Parties, & Gatherings...

### How to Properly Handle Food and Prevent Food Poisoning

Spring is here, and along with that comes an influx of picnics, graduation parties, and various other gatherings. It's a time filled with fun and food—of course you want to make sure that germs are a “no-show” by following these six tips to avoid food poisoning.

#### 1. Keep it clean.

- **Wash your hands with soap and running water** (warm or cold) for at least 20 seconds before eating and handling food—especially after passing the TV's germ remote control! Also wash your hands after using the bathroom and touching pets.
- **Wash your cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot soapy water after preparing each food item.**
- **Rinse produce under running water, including those with inedible skins and rinds.** For firm-skin fruits and vegetables, rub by hand or scrub with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing.

#### 2. Cook it well.

- Use a food thermometer to test party favorites, like chicken wings and ground beef sliders, and any other meat or microwaved dishes on your menu.
- Make sure chicken wings (and any other poultry dish) reach a minimum internal temperature of 165 °F and ground beef sliders reach 160 °F.

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## 3. Keep it safe.

- › Divide cooked food into shallow containers and store in a refrigerator or freezer until the party begins. This encourages rapid, even cooling... and discourages pre-party nibblers.
- › Hold hot foods at 140 °F or warmer. Use chafing dishes, slow cookers, and warming trays to keep food hot on the buffet table.
- › Maintain cold foods, like salsa and guacamole, at 40 °F or colder. Nest serving dishes in bowls of ice or use small serving trays. Replace often.

## 4. Watch the time.

- › Follow the food packaging's recommended cooking and standing times.
  - “Cold spots”—areas that are not completely cooked—can harbor germs.
  - Always follow the “standing time,” the extra minutes that food should stand in the microwave to complete the cooking process. Then check the internal temperature with a food thermometer.

- › Track the time that food stays on the buffet.
- › Throw out anything that has been out at room temperature for two hours or more.

## 5. Avoid mix-ups.

- › Separate raw meats from ready-to-eat foods, like veggies, when preparing, serving, or storing foods.
- › Offer guests serving utensils and small plates to discourage them from eating directly from the bowls with dips and salsa.
- › Throw a penalty flag at double-dippers (folks who repeatedly eat or dip from a shared food dish)!

## 6. Get it to-go.

- › Discard any foods on the buffet for two hours or more.
- › Divide leftovers into smaller portions or pieces, place in shallow containers, and refrigerate.
- › Don't wait too long to enjoy your leftovers. Refrigerate them for three to four days, at most. Freeze them, if you won't be eating your leftovers sooner.

## FAST FACTS ON FOOD SAFETY

### More than 200 diseases are spread through food

Millions of people fall ill every year and many die as a result of eating unsafe food. Diarrhoeal diseases alone kill an estimated 1.5 million children annually, and most of these illnesses are attributed to contaminated food or water. Proper food preparation can prevent most foodborne diseases.

### Foodborne diseases are increasing worldwide

Disease-causing organisms in food are transmitted far and wide by today's interconnected global food-chains—escalating how often and where foodborne illnesses occur.

Rapid urbanization worldwide is adding to risks, as urban dwellers eat more food prepared outside the home that may not be handled or prepared safely—including fresh foods and fish, meat and poultry.

### Emerging diseases are tied to food production

About 75% of the new infectious diseases affecting humans over the past 10 years were caused by bacteria, viruses and other pathogens that started in animals and animal products. Many of these diseases in people are related to the handling of infected domestic and wild animals during food production - in food markets and at slaughter houses.

### Chemical hazards can contaminate food

Acrylamide, which may cause cancer, is formed from natural ingredients during the cooking of some foods at high temperatures (generally above 120 °C), including fried potato products, baked cereal products and coffee. The food industry is working to find methods to lower exposure to such chemicals. Avoid overcooking when frying, grilling or baking food.